

FIELD TOUR NOTES: Claypool, Indiana

Overview

The information discussed during the field tour has been organized into four key categories to allow for easy review and comparison between communities. The categories are defined below:

General Considerations:

A portion of the information discussed during the field tour meetings was to provide general information the community, the history and the residents living and working within the area. Items that could not be included in the three categories below have been accounted for in this General Considerations category.

Aspirations:

Aspirations are the goals/ objectives/ projects that the community hopes to achieve during or after this planning process.

Strengths/ Opportunities:

Strengths are internal, positive attributes of your department and/or system. These are things that are within your control. Opportunities are external factors in your environment that are likely to contribute to your success.

Weaknesses/ Threats:

Weaknesses are negative factors that detract from your strengths. These are things that you might need to improve on to be competitive. Threats are external factors that you have no control over. You may want to consider putting in place contingency plans for dealing with them as/ if they occur.

Summary

On Friday, March 5, 2021 members of the project team met with Benny Sage, Town Council President, at the Tavern to discuss the Town of Claypool's existing conditions, aspirations, and overall needs. James Turnwald, Katie Clark, Scott Siefker and Alec Pormen were in attendance from the project team.

General Considerations:

- The Town population is around 430 residents, with two rail lines going through the community.
- Louis Dreyfus Agricultural Industries is a large employer in the area, although outside of Town limits, they do serve them through both water and sewer utilities.
- A Town Marshall oversees the public safety of the community and is supported by four reserves. They have two police cars that they Town has been able to provide.
- The Town pays \$10,000 / year to the Cay Township Fire Department to provide fire protection. EMS service is provided by Lutheran.
- The Town has not utilized any Community Crossing grant funding previously for any infrastructure projects.

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- Most Claypool residents work in Warsaw, but choose to live in Claypool for the elementary school and lower housing prices.
- Claypool is within Warsaw School District. The Claypool Elementary currently has approximately 200-300 students enrolled, and it is important that the student population is stabilized to keep the school open as it is a tremendous asset to the Town.
- The Someplace Else Saloon is the “heart” of the community, and has been a Town supporter of the local Trunk or Treat program in addition to other youth programming activities in recent years.
- Local utility services are as follows: broadband service is provided by RTC and electric service is provided by NIPSCO.

Aspirations:

- The Town is currently working on a sewer project as well as an on-going streets and sidewalk initiatives. There is a general desire to add more sidewalks throughout the community, especially connecting key destinations such as the park and Lion’s Club building.
- The existing Claypool water tower needs to be repainted.
- There is a desire to improve the walks and streetscape through the Main Street area, and link the downtown core to the park.
- Claypool Park recently added new play equipment and would like to rebuild a pavilion/shelter to expand the amenities the park offers.
- There is 26 acres north of Town that has been identified for residential expansion, which could include 40 new homes at a \$150-\$200,000 price point.
- The historic bank building has been purchased by a local 501c3 organization with the intent to add a residential rehab program. As a part of the development there will be a small market which will be operated by the same owners as the Saloon, and will offer the basic staples as well as specialty meat selections. This facility will be modeled after the market located in Leesburg.

Strengths/Opportunities:

- The Town is looking at selling their water utility service to American Water, and is currently weighing the financial pros and cons of this decision.
- The historic downtown core contains a few apartments, tavern and post office. The post office has been operational in Claypool since 1841.
- Two Habitat for Humanity homes have been constructed in the Town, and there is a potential of additional units being added.
- The Lions Club building is available for rent, and serves as the “Community Center” for the Town. It is where the scouts, church organizations and the Town Council meet.
- The Lions Club does host a Fish Fry with proceeds going to fund improvements such as construction of ramps to provide improved facilities and private homes.

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Weaknesses/ Threats:

- The rail lines through downtown are very active, which poses a potential safety threat for pedestrians crossing the tracks.
- The Town has many vacant buildings downtown that are in need of stabilization and rehabilitation.
- A general sidewalk improvement program would enhance connections from the downtown to the park and Lions Club facility. There is a walk along CR700W to Claypool Elementary School.
- The rail lines through downtown are active, however there hasn't been any consideration to a whistle (noise) ban due to safety concerns.